BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Issue: **99-30** **11** Pages
July 30, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Private and Public Sector Investment

- **For the first time since 1994, investment in BC (+6.5%) is forecast to increase at about the same rate as the national average (+6.8%).** The province had been stuck near the back of the pack during most of the last five years. Among the regions, Newfoundland (+29.2%), New Brunswick (+22.2%) and Yukon (+17.7%) are all expected to see double-digit gains this year. Ontario (+9.2%) is the only other region where investment growth this year is likely to outperform the national average.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Private and public sector investment in the province is forecast to increase 6.5% during 1999.** An anticipated 24.0% jump in public sector spending on structures and equipment is expected to be combined with a 2.5% increase in private sector investment.

  Investors in the province have become much more optimistic since the beginning of the year, when spending was forecast to fall below 1998 levels in the private sector, and rise much more moderately in the public sector.

  Both private and public sector establishments anticipate that they will increase their purchases of machinery and equipment quite significantly, expanding 21.1% overall. However, the private sector expects construction activity to remain depressed, falling 8.0% during 1999. This is largely due to continued weakness in the residential sector, where investment is forecast to drop at double-digit rates (-14.6%) for the second straight year. Offsetting this decline is an anticipated 10.8% jump in private sector spending on non-residential structures.

  Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- ***Seasonally adjusted* exports of BC products rose 1.5% between April and May.** The increase in exports occurred despite slower growth in sales to the US, which were up only 0.4% after expanding 4.9% in the previous month. This was largely due to a 0.6% decline in forest product exports, combined with slower growth (+0.5%) in sales of BC manufactured goods south of the border. However, exports to other countries ended a two-month slump, rising 3.8% between April and May. *Source: BC STATS*

Income

- **BC taxfilers reported a median total income (from employment, investments, transfers and other sources) of $20,100 in 1997.** Employment was the most important source of income (72%), with another 13% coming from government transfers. About 5% of total income reported was from investments, with the remainder coming from private pension plans (5%), RRSPs (2%) or other sources (3%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **The median employment income of British Columbians increased 0.9%, to $22,000, in 1997.** Ontario ($23,700) was the only province where median employment earnings were higher than in BC. However, residents of NWT ($26,900) and Yukon ($24,900), who receive premium wages to compensate for their relatively isolated location, had the highest earnings in the country. The median employment income for all Canadians was $21,100. Seven in every ten taxfilers reported some employment income on their 1997 income tax return.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Report **BC unions facing new challenges from secure footing**

Did you know...

Last year, Canadians spent an estimated $2.3 billion on health-related R&D. Nearly half (44%) of these expenditures were made by institutes of higher education, including hospitals affiliated with universities. Businesses (27%) and other hospitals (18%) were also major players.

- **Men in the province continue to take home a fatter paycheque ($28,000) than women, who had median employment earnings of $17,300 in 1997.** However, the gap between the earnings of men and women has been shrinking since the beginning of the decade, when women in the province typically earned about half (55%) as much as men. In 1997, the ratio was just under 62%, almost the same as for the country as a whole. This may reflect the province's diversification away from a strong dependence on natural resource extraction (where wages tend to be higher, and the workforce is often male-dominated) toward other industries such as those in the service sector. Since 1991, the median employment earnings of women in BC have increased 17.7%. During the same period, the employment income of men has risen 4.5%.

  Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS

Economic Dependency Ratios

- **Taxfilers relied less on government transfer payments as a source of income in 1997 than in the previous year.** BC's economic dependency ratio (government transfer payments for every $100 of employment income) was 17.5, down from 18.0 in 1996. Ontario (16.4), Alberta (11.8) and the two territories (11.5 in Yukon and 11.4 in NWT) were the only regions where people were less dependent on government transfers as a source of income. The national economic dependency ratio was 18.2 in 1997

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **CPP ($4.85) and Old Age Security ($4.65) benefits accounted for more than half of the $17.47 in government transfer payments received for every $100 in employment income earned in BC.** Other sources of transfer income included employment insurance ($2.18), social assistance ($2.07), WCB payments ($1.08) and tax credits such as the Child Tax Benefit ($1.18), the BC Family Bonus ($0.85) and the GST credit ($0.60). In addition to government transfer payments, residents of the province received $7.50 in private pension benefits for every $100 of employment income in 1997. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Tourism

- **Tourism room revenue in BC was down for the second straight month in April, falling to 1.7% (seasonally adjusted) below the March level.** The decline in revenue may have been related to a drop (-0.9%, seasonally adjusted) in the number of overnight visits to BC from the United States. Visits from the US had soared during the winter months, boosting room revenues, but the downturn in March and April suggests that volumes may be returning to more normal levels.

  Among the regions, Kootenay (+4.4%), Vancouver Island/Coast (+2.4%) and North Coast (+1.6%) all saw revenues increase over March levels. However, revenues were down in all other regions. Cariboo (-9.2%), Thompson/Okanagan (-7.3%) and Nechako (-6.0%) were hardest hit, while Mainland/Southwest (-1.6%) and Northeast (-0.7%) posted more modest declines.

  Source: BC STATS

Student Loans

- **In the 1996/97 school year, 326,592 students at universities, colleges and private institutions in Canada took out student loans totalling $1.4 billion.** Based on enrollment data, this suggests that one in every five students at colleges and universities (no enrollment figures were available for private institutions) had a student loan. The average loan for the 1996/97 school year was $4,094 for university students, $3,741 for those studying at community colleges, and $5,167 for students at private institutions.

  A growing number of students are relying on student loan programs to help finance their studies. The percentage of students taking out these loans has increased from just over 15% in 1990/91 to about 20% in 1996/97. During this period, the average loan has grown by almost a thousand dollars, rising from $3,172 to $4,152.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 81-003, Vol. 5, No. 4 & BC STATS

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

July 30, 1999

Infoline Report: B.C. unions facing new challenges from secure footing

Contact: George Dufour / (250) 387-0376

Originally published in June 1999 issue of *Business Indicators*. Annual subscription: $60 + GST

Unless otherwise indicated, statistics in this report are produced from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey. They were obtained through a special order by BC STATS to examine the extent of unionisation in British Columbia, and the characteristics of unionised workers.

As British Columbia's economy expands beyond its traditional resource industry base, its workforce is being reshaped. This has presented challenges for the province's unions.

The union movement continues strong in British Columbia. Unionisation rates are higher than in most other provinces and union members are paid at substantially higher rates, on average, than non-unionised workers. The number of union members rose to 513 thousand in 1998, up from 503 thousand in 1997.

However, there are some worrisome trends from the organised labour point of view. Employment levels have been falling in the heavily unionised forestry and mineral industries during the 1990s. Stubbornly high levels of unemployment in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada have done nothing to improve union bargaining positions. Where employee jobs have been created, many have been in businesses that are too small to be practically organised. Often they are part-time jobs.

These and other developments have caused unions to widen their organising activities to include new types of workers in new types of industries. One incentive for this is the need to look to where employment is growing fastest - in the service industries. Another is the social mission to extend their protection to the most vulnerable members of the workforce.

The sense of mission is not new to the established industrial based unions. Many or most can trace their origins back to the harsh workplace realities of the 1920s and 1930s, when the public safety net was all but non-existent. But the rapid expansion of service industries in this decade has created conditions that have revitalised commitment to this tradition.

New Initiatives For Organised Labour

It's the business of John Weir, Director of Organising for the British Columbia Federation of Labour, to bring more workers into the union fold.

Mr Weir estimates that the portion of all paid workers (employees plus self-employed) that unions could eventually hope to organise would be about 54 per cent. This amounts to an additional 26 per cent of British Columbia paid workers (483 thousand) over and above those already unionised. He considers that the maximum limit is constrained mainly by the number of workers employed in 'micro businesses', those with less than five employees. Businesses this small are regarded as impractical targets for union membership drives.

An important objective for union organisers is to include more young workers in their memberships. He notes that the British Columbia Federation and three other provincial Federations under the Canadian Labour Congress have established youth committees.

The focus on youth derives partly from the labour movement's renewed sense of social mission. A dearth of good employment opportunities in the 1990s has left many young workers stuck in low paying jobs with few benefits and little or no security. They have become a significant part of the underclass of low paid workers that the movement is trying to reach.

Speaking of the social goals of labour, Mr. Weir observes that unions have always had to balance the need to allocate resources for organising new groups of workers against the need to serve existing members.

He feels that there has been a shift back toward the organising model in recent years as unions have expanded the scope of their organising drives to include workers employed in completely unrelated industries. He notes that these campaigns often aim to bring in more young 'precariously employed' workers doing the irregular or part-time work, service jobs that might once have been considered as 'stepping stones', but which many people have had to accept as indefinite employment in the 1990s.

Service industry employment has expanded to include 78 per cent of all workers in British Columbia. Workers in this broad category accounted for 91 per cent of the 161 thousand net increase in the number of employees between 1990 and 1998. Employment numbers have grown especially fast for retail stores, hotels, motels, restaurants, and for the wide variety of specialised personal services that have appeared in recent years.

Although service workers might be thought to have more to gain from unionisation than workers in other industries, they are not always the easiest to organise. For one thing, service industry jobs usually lack the dangerous working conditions producing what Mr. Weir calls a 'radicalising experience' for workers in industries such as forestry, mining or steelwork. He also cites the mobility of capital as another factor that can reduce the chances of success in an organising drive.

Nonetheless, a number of major unions with unlikely industrial bases have made serious efforts to bring in more service workers during the 1990s. These have included The Canadian Auto Workers, International Wood and Allied Workers, the Teamsters, and the United Steel Workers of America.

High profile service businesses already organised or targeted for organisation have included units of McDonald's Restaurants, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Starbucks, and Chapters Bookstores.

A B.C. Based Forestry Union Expanding Into New Areas

The Industrial Wood and Allied Workers (IWA) is the only British Columbia based national union. It has also been among the most active of British Columbia unions in extending its organising activities to totally different industries.

One of the reasons for this is the organisation of the union along geographic lines. Union vice president David Tones asserts that this allows the union to set up local centres to serve the needs of all organised workers in a particular region, and to better address local priorities than would be possible through an industry based approach. Because the union already maintains offices in many forest communities, it can be the natural choice for other workers in those communities to turn to when looking to organise. From the point of view of union operations, the geographic structure allows efficient use of local resources.

The I.W.A. began its main initiative to recruit outside the forest industry in 1997. Since then, workers outside forestry have come to account for about one third of total membership.

Many of these are in service businesses including, among others:

- three video rental outlets
- an airport car rental operation
- a number of car dealerships
- a Value Village location
- a group of cab drivers

Not all of the union's bargaining units outside forestry are in services. For example it claims about 800 members working in greenhouses, nurseries, and other agricultural operations.

British Columbia Among Most Heavily Unionised Provinces

A larger proportion of employees are unionised in British Columbia than in most other provinces. Thirty-five per cent of all British Columbia employees were union members in 1998, compared to 31 per cent in Canada as a whole. Only Newfoundland and Quebec could claim higher ratios, with 39 per cent and 36 per cent respectively.

The British Columbia union movement gained strength from 1993 changes to the Provincial Labour Code, which eased the rules by which workplace certification can be granted. In the four years before the new code was proclaimed, bargaining unit certifications granted were at or below 263 per year. Since then, they have averaged over 400 annually. This increase has had a proportionately smaller effect on the number of employees becoming union members because so many of the newly organised bargaining units have been small. This, along with other factors, has allowed the rate of unionisation to remain around 35 per cent for most of the 1990s.

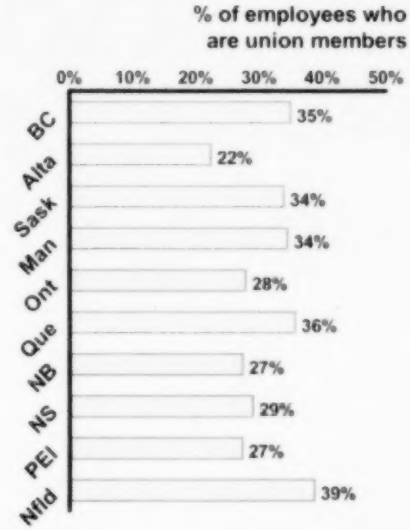
There is little obvious explanation for British Columbia's relatively high rates of unionisation in its industrial employment mix. A very large part of the province's workforce is concentrated in service industries, many of which have been traditionally union resistant.

For example, in 1998 British Columbia had the highest employment concentrations in Canada for workers in accommodation and food service industries; professional scientific and technical services; information, culture and recreation; and real estate and leasing.

Overall, service workers accounted for 78 per cent of British Columbia employment in 1998, more than in any other province and considerably higher than the 74 per cent ratio for Canada as a whole.

But although British Columbia's service industry workers are less likely to be unionised than other workers in the province, they are more likely to be unionised than service workers in other provinces. Union coverage of British

1998 Rates of Unionisation By Province



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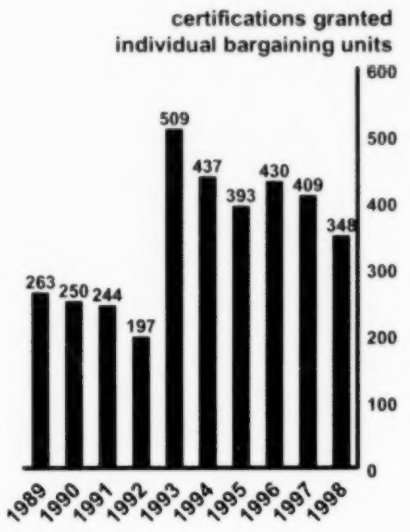
B.C. Union Certifications Jump In 1993 With Introduction of New Labour Code



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Columbia service workers in 1998 (including both union members and non-members covered by union contracts) was 37 per cent. This compared to a 32 per cent union coverage rate in the rest of Canada.

Of the 339 thousand British Columbia workers in retail and wholesale trade, 17 per cent were covered by union contracts, compared to 14 per cent in the rest of Canada. Of the 194 thousand health and welfare workers in the province, 64 per cent were covered by union contracts, as compared to 55 per cent in the rest of Canada. Of the 148 thousand British Columbia accommodation and food services industry workers (hotels, motels, restaurants, etc.), 11 per cent were covered by union contracts, compared to 8 per cent in the rest of Canada. The 92 thousand public administration workers in British Columbia (including federal, provincial and municipal civil servants) were 82 per cent union covered, compared to 75 per cent in the rest of Canada

The indications are that British Columbia unions continue to be successful in organising service industry workers. Data from the British Columbia Labour Relations Board show that 77 per cent of workers in bargaining units certified by the Board in 1998 were in the service sector. Union membership roles were growing particularly fast in the health and social services category, which accounted for 27 per cent of all workers newly certified in 1998.

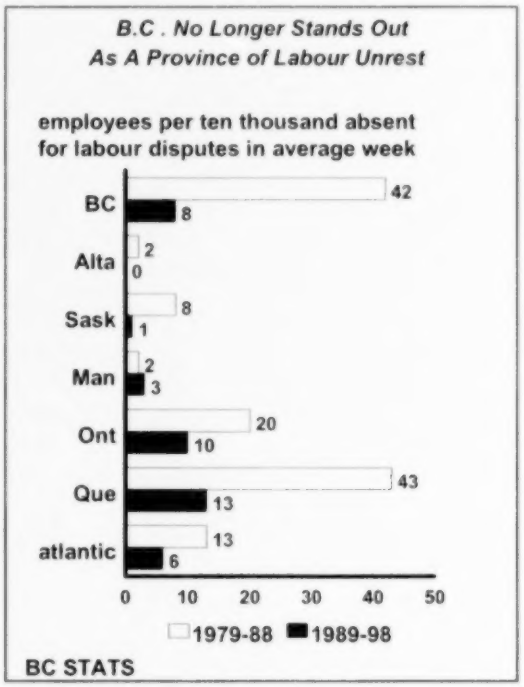
Even in the traditionally highly unionised manufacturing sector, British Columbia unionisation rates are high by comparison with other provinces. Just over 40 per cent of manufacturing jobs in British Columbia were covered by union contracts in 1998, compared with 35 per cent in the rest of Canada.

Less Labour Strife In the 1990s

A high provincial unionisation rate has not brought British Columbia a particularly high level of labour strife. During the 1990s British Columbia workers have experienced relatively few working days lost to labour disputes, compared to workers in other provinces.

This could not have been said of the province during the 1980s, when British Columbia gained a reputation as one of the centres of labour unrest in Canada. Over the ten year period from 1979 through 1988, there were an average of 42 British Columbia employees per ten thousand absent from work in any given week because of labour disputes. This was the second highest rate in Canada after Quebec, where the rate was 43 per ten thousand employees.

But during the ten year period from 1989 through 1998, the number of British Columbia employees absent from work during an average week because of labour disputes dropped to only 8 per ten thousand. This was lower than the rates for Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, and well below the Canadian average of 12 per ten thousand.



Across Canada men have been far more likely to be absent from work because of labour dispute than women. This may change, particularly if women workers use their growing

collective bargaining strength to close the gap between male and female average wages.

Union Jobs Pay Better

As elsewhere in Canada, average wage rates have been markedly higher for unionised workers in British Columbia than for non-unionised workers.

British Columbia employees who were union members earned an average hourly rate of $20.46 in 1998, compared to an average of $15.46 earned by employees who were not union members. The $5.00 gap between union and non-union rates amounted to 32 per cent of the non-union hourly rate, a wider difference than the 29 per cent gap for Canada as a whole. The widest difference for any province was the 52 per cent gap between union and non-union average rates in New Brunswick. The narrowest wage rate differences between union and non-union workers were in Alberta (27 per cent) and Ontario (26 per cent).

Women are paid less than men on average, whether they are unionised or not. But the male/female wage difference is smaller for unionised workers than for non-unionised workers. This implies that unionisation tends to narrow the male/female wage gap.

Male union members in British Columbia earned an average hourly wage of $21.64 in 1998, compared to $17.43 for non-union men. The $4.21 difference amounted to 24 per cent of the average wage rate for non-union workers.

Large as it was, this difference was dwarfed by the 44 per cent difference in average wage rates between unionised women and non-unionised women. Women union members in British Columbia earned an average hourly wage rate of $19.22, $5.83 higher than the rate for non-unionised women.

Overall, average wage rates are higher in British Columbia than in any other province – both for

Employee Average Hourly Wages
Annual Average 1998

	Male			Female		
	union member	not union member	difference	union member	not union member	difference
B.C.	$21.64	$17.43	$4.21	$19.22	$13.39	$5.83
Alta	$19.43	$16.57	$2.86	$17.18	$11.76	$5.42
Sask	$18.20	$13.89	$4.31	$15.18	$10.61	$4.57
Man	$18.41	$14.13	$4.28	$15.38	$10.93	$4.45
Ont	$20.33	$17.15	$3.18	$18.28	$13.56	$4.72
Que	$18.73	$15.70	$3.03	$17.53	$12.23	$5.30
N.B.	$18.26	$12.96	$5.30	$16.58	$9.88	$6.70
N.S.	$17.73	$13.14	$4.59	$15.46	$10.24	$5.22
P.E.I.	$16.71	$11.07	$5.64	$16.62	$9.38	$7.24
Nfld	$17.06	$12.93	$4.13	$15.74	$9.01	$6.73
Canada	$19.68	$16.29	$3.39	$17.71	$12.61	$5.10

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union members and for non-union members. It may be that the high average wage rates won by union members in British Columbia have served to elevate the benchmarks for non-union workers.

Women As Likely to Be Union Members As Men In British Columbia

Female employees are as likely to be union members as male employees in British Columbia. For both, the proportion of employees who were union members was 35 per cent in 1998.

The total number of male union members in the province was higher than the total number of female union members - 263 thousand males as opposed to 250 thousand females. But this was because there were more male employees overall, not because males were any more likely to join unions.

Other provinces showed very different patterns of male and female unionisation rates. In some, women were more likely to be union members than men. In others, it was men who were more likely to be unionised.

Male employees in Quebec, for example, were 37 per cent unionised in 1998. But Quebec female employees were only 34 per cent unionised. In Saskatchewan, women employees were more heavily unionised than men – 37 per cent as opposed to 31 per cent. For Canada as a whole, the rate of unionisation for male employees was 32 per cent, while the rate for females was 29 per cent.

These figures apply for all unions taken together. Numbers released in the 1998 British Columbia Labour Directory, an annual publication of the Ministry of Labour, indicate that individual unions are often either predominantly male or female.

As might be expected, the heavy industrial based unions generally include far more men than women. For example, out of 11,217 British Columbia members in the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, only 1,098 were women. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters reported 2,962 women members out of a total membership of 18,824.

Public sector unions came closer to gender balance, and could sometimes claim more female members than male. For example, the British Columbia Government and Service Employees Union's 65,757 members included 39,537 women. The British Columbia Teachers' Federation counted 44,121 members, of which 30,174 were female. On the other hand, the Canadian Union of Public Employees included only 38,034 women among its 115,510 members.

Not surprisingly, the British Columbia Nurses

Employees By Union Membership Status - 1998

	MEN			WOMEN		
	Union Member ('000)	Not Union Member ('000)	Per Cent Unionised	Union Member ('000)	Not Union Member ('000)	Per Cent Unionised
BC	263	489	35%	250	466	35%
Alta	130	502	21%	139	432	24%
Sask	55	124	31%	64	109	37%
Man	79	155	34%	77	142	35%
Ont	739	1,714	30%	569	1678	25%
Que	553	935	37%	441	864	34%
NB	39	104	27%	36	97	27%
NS	53	124	30%	46	119	28%
PEI	35	51	41%	29	50	37%
Nfld	6	18	25%	8	17	32%
Canada	1,952	4,217	32%	1658	3975	29%

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Union included far more women than men - 30,174 out of a total membership of 44,121. And, of the 10,729 members in the Health Sciences Association, 8,800 were women.

Younger Workers Less Likely to Be Unionised

In British Columbia and across Canada, older employees are far more likely to be union members than younger employees. In British Columbia only 14 per cent of employees 15 to 24 years of age were union members in 1998, compared to 47 per cent of workers 45 years and older. British Columbia had a higher proportion of unionised employees in the 45 years and older age bracket than any province except Newfoundland.

Even so, unions have been more successful in British Columbia than elsewhere in Canada at organising younger workers. The British Columbia unionisation rate for 15 to 24 year olds was more than 3 percentage points higher than the Canadian average. Quebec is the only province where unions have recruited as large a portion of younger workers.

In the 25 to 34 year age bracket, 30 per cent of British Columbia employees were unionised. This group includes most of the generation 'X' workers who have experienced so much difficulty in securing permanent, well paying jobs.

A larger percentage of employees in the late baby boomer group (ages 35 to 44) have found their way into union jobs. Thirty-nine per cent of British Columbians in this age group were union members in 1998.

The most heavily unionised employee group of all in British Columbia were males forty-five years of age and older. Just under half (48 per cent) were union members in 1998. Women employees in this age range were also more likely to be union members than women workers in younger age groups.

Union Members As Per Cent of All Employees In Age Bracket - 1998

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45+
BC	14%	30%	39%	47%
Alta	8%	18%	28%	31%
Sask	13%	30%	43%	44%
Man	13%	31%	42%	45%
Ont	10%	23%	32%	38%
Que	14%	31%	41%	45%
NB	4%	21%	33%	41%
NS	7%	23%	36%	41%
PEI	10%	23%	38%	38%
Nfld	13%	35%	46%	50%
Canada	11%	26%	36%	41%

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North American Comparisons

By comparison with the United States, Canada is a highly unionised country. Figures released by the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics indicate that 14 per cent of American wage and salary workers were union members in 1998. This compares with 31 per cent of employees in Canada reported as union members, and 35 per cent in British Columbia.

American unionisation rates are particularly low in the private sector. Just under one in ten (9.5 per cent) of American private sector workers were unionised in 1998, compared to 38 per cent of government workers. Exactly comparable numbers are not readily available for Canadian workers. But figures on the number of Canadian workers covered by union contracts, including union members and also non union members whose work is covered by union contracts, suggest that many more private sector workers were under some sort of union umbrella in Canada. The proportions of Canadian workers covered by union contracts were 21 per cent for the private sector and 76 per cent for the public sector. In British Columbia, 24 per cent of private sector workers, and 82 per cent of public sector workers were covered by union contracts.

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Apart from the striking difference in unionisation rates, there are notable similarities in the profiles of union workers in the United States and Canada.

Government workers are far more likely to be unionised than private sector workers in both countries. Men are more likely to be union members than women. And union members earn substantially more than non-union members, on average.

The overall U.S. union membership rate fell from 20 per cent in 1983, the first year for which comparable data are available, to the 1998 level of 14 per cent. Again, there are no exactly equivalent data available to compare this to what has been happening in Canada. However, union membership data for British Columbia, at least, suggest that no such sharp drop has taken place in membership rates over this period.

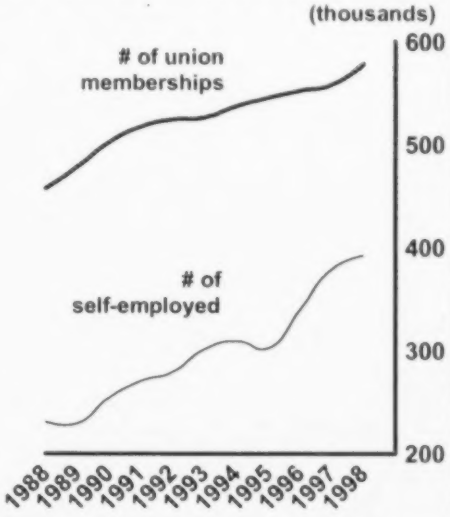
Figures on union memberships collected by the British Columbia Ministry of Labour indicate that the ratio of union memberships to paid workers fell slowly from the mid 1950s to the late 1980s. Since then, it has shown no clear and persistent tendency to either rise or fall.

When self-employed people are factored in, a somewhat different trend is apparent. If British Columbia union memberships are taken as a ratio of total employment (employees plus all self-employed) there is a slight decline between 1990 and 1998.

This reflects the appearance in the labour force of large numbers of self-employed people. Of the 299 thousand net increase in total employment for British Columbia between 1990 and 1998, 138 thousand were self-employed people. The 1998 total for all self-employed people in the province amounted to 386 thousand, as compared to 513 thousand for union members.

Some self-employed could also be union members, but most are not. Many have found their public voice in organisations representing small business. As their numbers have been growing, they have begun to assert themselves as a third powerful force in the new economy, alongside big business and labour.

Self-Employment Rising Faster Than Union Membership In British Columbia



Source: BC Ministry of Labour for membership data and Statistics Canada for labour force data.

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July 30, 1999

fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) May	3,001	14.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) May	2,355	13.6
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) May	2,757	-0.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Jun '99	one year ago
BC	111.5	1.0
Canada	110.5	1.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jun '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,073	1.6
Employed - BC	1,896	2.4
Unemployed - BC	178	-6.7
		Jun '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.6	9.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.6	8.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	July 28/99	July 29/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.05	6.55
- 5 year	7.75	6.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	July 28/99	July 29/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5110	1.5034
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6630	0.6639
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	May '99	one year ago
BC	622.77	1.3
Canada	605.83	0.3

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 1st Half, 1999
- Business Indicators, July 1999
- Current Statistics, July 1999
- Tourism Room Revenue, April 1999

Next week

- Exports, May 1999

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